

TRANSCENDENTALISM.

“NOTHING is easier,” said Voltaire, “than for people to read and converse to no purpose. One of the ancients wrote a book to prove that every word was an ambiguity.” The epigram of a French diplomat. “Words were invented to conceal meaning,” passed into a proverb. This unbelief in the virtue of human speech may have proceeded from deeper unbelief in the virtue of mankind. Our age has a happier view of social relations, and pursues mutual comprehension with boundless faith in the tongue and pen. Yet its speculative and religious terminology does not yield even an alphabet of conversation. Our formulas, piled in the pride of classification, prove but bricks of the ancient Babel after all, and tumble back, ineffectual, upon the heads of the builders. Never was colloquial humanity farther from Plato’s all-important preliminary of clear definitions. There is no virtue in “star-eyed science” to dispel these enduring aspects of the truth the idealist sings:—

“We are spirits clad in veils;
Heart by heart was never seen:
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen.”

Yet must we have communion on the best terms possible; and so there is deeper interest than ever in bringing speech to judgment, and words to legitimate meanings. We shall hardly prosper in this work till we reform the habit of defining terms of large historical significance by current meanings or associations, ignoring their essential purport in the philosophy of mind. Thus recent materialists, in general, treat with contempt such terms as theism, theology, religion, as concerned with an external personal God; although these terms have always represented,

at bottom, the effort to find *unity* and *substance*, as well as providence, in the world. The reason given for this rejection — that, unless words are used in their current meaning, they will be misunderstood — is unfortunate; it being obvious that a material part of the current meaning itself is here rejected, and injustice done to great permanent tendencies of human nature. The term “transcendental” is a notable instance of the same kind.

The popular use of this word to signify the incomprehensible and impracticable is natural enough, since philosophers are the fathers of it, and have applied it to matters that do really lie apart from common observation. We cannot wonder that it was given over to Satan by the Church and the World, among the other dark things, — such as dark glens, dark plans, dark skins, heathen blindness, and “the Black Art,” — to be kept at safe distance, with holy horror by the devout, and off-hand contempt by the wise in their own generation. For the old theology could not help being startled at this Shadow, writing doom on its walls; and to cry “fool and mad” was but natural instinct. Assailed by ignorance and blind authority, the term has been even more contemptuously treated by that current form of system-building which repudiates metaphysics in the name of science. On the other hand, there are metaphysicians who object that it means substitution of sentiment for perception, and assumption for induction. There are Hegelians who sacrifice it to a superficial etymology, and say with Castelar in his eloquent essays on Republicanism in Europe, that “in ancient thought the absolute is transcendental, in Hegel it is inherent:” a distinction for which the proper meaning of the word in question affords no authority. Led in the same way, perhaps, by an etymological inference, not a few would consign “Transcendentalism” to the past as a form of that very Supernaturalism against which it has claimed to be the one thorough and effective protest. Strange, indeed, if a philosophy whose central idea is the immanence of the infinite should mean to affirm that an outside God is working on the world, whether by miracles or in human ways! Transcendentalism is a far stronger reaction against the old theology than scientific induction can be without it; yet there is danger that, in the very impetus of their reaction, scientists shall come to confound this indispensable ally with the foe they would destroy.

This will naturally happen in proportion as they accept the explanation of thought, laid down in recent physical text books, as "an impression on the brain derived from the external world through the medium of the senses;" since, while the transcendentalist and the supernaturalist are at utter variance on points of utmost moment, this explanation is equally rejected by both. The absorbing question of the hour has here disregarded organic and permanent bearings, and makes one incidental analogy the test of affinity and the measure of worth. A similar illusion confounds the philosophical idea of intuition with the theological idea of inspiration, because both deny the exclusive claim of "experience" to be the source of knowledge, and because both are supposed to affirm certitude in regard to unsolved and open questions, and an ideal basis for what are "pure results of historical derivation." Their common recognition of relations with the Infinite, though under very different meanings of the word, is thought to imply that they agree in denying the universality of law, and their common demand that the less shall be ascribed to a greater than itself, rather than the greater to a less, to indicate that they are alike in tracing the world to supernatural will. Such confusion of ideas increases with the lapse of time during which study has taken an almost exclusively physical direction, until the philosophy which emphasizes principles has come to pass for an ambitious pretence of wisdom beyond what is known as well as what is "written;" so that even the effort to show that it is simply common sense and universal method provokes a new form of contempt, as if much bluster had been made in proclaiming what, after all, is confessed to be but a form of common place. The result of all this is an impression that transcendentalism was the opinion of a small and eccentric school, and has already given place to "the scientific method"—the positive gospel of this and all coming time.

As one by whom this philosophy was accepted, not as the opinion of a few thinkers, but as the independent *rationale of human thought*, and who has found its main postulates essentially undisturbed by full acceptance of the results of science, I propose to present that view of its meaning which its history appears to me to warrant, and to state some of its vital relations to the sanity and progress of mind.

That the name "Transcendentalism" was given, a century ago, to a method in philosophy opposed to the theory of Locke—that all knowledge comes from the senses—is more widely known than the fact that what this method affirmed and involved is of profound import for all generations. It emphasized Mind as formative force behind all definable contents or acts of consciousness,—as that which makes it possible to speak of any thing as *known*. It recognized as primal condition of knowing the transmutation of sense-impressions by original laws of mind, whose constructive power is not to be explained or measured by the data of sensation: just as they use the eye and ear to transform unknown spatial motions into the obviously human conceptions which we call color and sound. All this the Lockian system overlooked; a very serious omission, as regards both science and common sense.

Locke was probably somewhat misconstrued. He meant that sense-impressions come first in our conscious experience; his concern being with the apparent process, rather than with the real origin of our knowledge. He was aiming, not only to reduce to plain good sense the medieval metaphysics of his time, but also to combat an enthusiasm of the self-deifying sort, resulting from the spiritual ferment of the English Revolution. He had seen how easily fanatical ecstasies were glorified as vision and revelation, and how perilous they were to the political and religious liberty which he was building into positive institutions. His famous comparison of the mind to a sheet of blank paper was, I suppose, a vigorous way of repudiating these imaginary inspirations and emphasizing the public and common elements of experience, rather than the startling assertion it would seem to be, that the substance by and through which we think and know is of itself sheer passivity and emptiness. He rejected "innate ideas," considered as distinct conceptions, supernaturally conveyed into the mind, and there preëxisting, ready for use, independent of education and even of growth. His crusade against this antecedence of ready-made ideas as a mass of concrete details prior to experience seems to have drawn away his attention from other and better modes of conceiving the originality and primacy of mind. He posits "experience" as the only source of knowledge; forgetting to inquire how the

"blank paper," which could not respond to innate impressions, should be in any degree more competent to report results of "experience" without constructive energies of its own. To pretend that it could do so would have been simply to flee from supernaturalism in one form to fall into it in another. Here is the unconscious incoherence in Locke's account of the matter, as in that of Stuart Mill, the more recent apostle of "experience." Yet Locke's own phraseology shows that his good sense was not unaware of facts wholly incompatible with the "blank paper" theory; as when he says (Book II, chap. 1, § 4) that the "operations of the soul (in reflection) do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas which could not be had from things without, we observing them in ourselves."

Every thing depends, if we would fairly interpret a thinker, on recognizing the emphasis given to certain elements of his thought by his special aim, and reading between the lines other elements, which he evidently takes for granted as not needing statement at all. Locke, though a clear-headed man and liberal politician, was not a metaphysical thinker. The profound meaning involved in the fact that such constant ideas as Substance, Personality, Law, Cause, "could not be had from things without," never interested his practical and concrete mind, which thought it quite sufficient to mass such facts under the vague term "experience," and let them go at that. In this respect, his example is largely followed in days when science, building upon "experience," is to a very great extent absorbed in collecting innumerable physical details. Yet I doubt if Locke would have relished being made the father of the "Sensational School," and put into the limbo of for ever decanting sense-impressions into mental bottles to prove that physical phenomena are the sole authors and finishers of man. Had he inquired into the distinctive origin and significance of what he called "reflection," he might have reached the starting point of Transcendentalism. He was a keen observer of palpable processes; and this habit is very apt to hide those conditions in mental faculty which the processes do not exhibit, but imply; until, as in much modern method which passes for scientific, the mere succession of phenomena is substituted for the substance in which they inhere. Neither the self-consciousness of mind as such, nor the forces

that lie behind conscious understanding, attracted Locke's utilitarian temperament. He was, so far, the ancestor of that school of evolutionists which holds itself at war with Transcendentalism. But he could not have anticipated the positive denial of such transcendental conditions in the next century by his enthusiastic disciples, Helvetius, Condillac, and others, who were preparing the French mind to throw aside, in sheer reaction, not only the continuity of human evolution through the past, but that constant, undemonstrable element that makes the prime condition of present certitude.

What we conceive these schools to have misprized is the living substance and function of Mind itself. Conscious of its own energy; productive of its own processes; active even in receiving; giving its own construction to its incomes from the unknown through sense; thus involved in those very contents of time and space which, as historical antecedents, *appear* to create it,—mind is obviously the exponent of forces more spontaneous and original than any special product of its own experience. Behind all these products must be that substance in and through which they are produced. Or are we, as Taine will have it, mere trains of sensation in the void; successions of thoughts without a thinker; incessant flowing, yet no living stream; a process where what proceeds may be neglected or is naught? Can the knower be mere resultant of his own knowledge, call it "experience" or what you will? How should there be any knowing of things at all, except there be first one competent to know, whose nature is father and fount of the act of cognition? When you assert that all is from experience, have you forgotten the experiencer himself? Or, if you reply that he is of course taken for granted, then pray do not immediately consign him over among his products, but consider what your concession involves. Is he not more than all his past processes, and primal condition of all that are to come? If personality be not real, science is at war with human consciousness. If it be real, it involves powers which constantly condition experience and determine its forms and results. Nor can it be regarded as a mere product or transfer of the past experiences of the race, since the transmutation of one conscious personal identity into another is inconceivable; and no transfer of experiences could ever produce an experiencer. To say that

this is idealism may demand the statement to the dictionary, but does not refute it.

We affirm, however, that it is actualism also. Processes of phenomena come to us as forms of knowledge; and idea, or conception, inevitably determines form. All we can know is ideas, — yet not as unrealities; 'tis the recognition of them as reporting objective truth that makes them, for us, knowledge. Nor can knowledge ever be any thing else than this. And although in an idea there are two things, — the subject who thinks and the object thought, — the two are one in that common substance of mind which makes them what they are; and this not in the case of secondary qualities only, such as color and sound, which do obviously depend on the mental relations of the organism, but equally for all qualities and even substances, *since these can address us only in the language of mind.* As Goethe says, "to ascribe every thing to experience is to forget the half of experience." In other words, no philosophy of human knowledge can be genuine which leaves out man himself, or the unknown, unfathomed continent of active mind of which he is a living portion. Nor can the results of such omission be other than subversive.

"Were not the eye itself a sun, no sun for it could ever shine:
By nothing noble could the heart be won, were not the heart divine."

Modern materialism makes much of the supposed distinction between "creating every thing out of the subject (*i. e.*, the thinking mind)," and "letting things speak for themselves." But how are things to speak at all to us, except through the nature of mind? No bridge to reality is possible that does not start from this. And the bridge being granted, why should it carry over our cognitions of sensible particulars, and yet refuse passage to universal conceptions and principles of order, which are the direct and necessary forms of mental action? Does the idea of cause, for instance, depend on mind, individual or general, in any sense which should destroy its objective value, because proceeding from us and not from Nature? By the same logic, the things to which we attach it are under equal uncertainty, since they are knowable only in their relations with our minds; and

¹ See Lange's "History of Materialism," p. 213.

their succession, which the Lockian would put in place of Cause, is also a form of human conception applied to things. And so we land in a phantom world, out of which the materialist himself who leads us there must be the first to take the back-track. We may add that the doctrine that things can "speak to us for themselves" without regard to mental conditions is not only the metaphysical basis of such dogmas as transubstantiation, but a practical opening for intellectual and spiritual despotism in every form.

But these primal conditions of knowledge are not readily observed. Inevitably assumed in all mental processes, they are not to be demonstrated; for the very act of demonstration is, itself, as it were, let down from these heavens, and by invisible threads. They are not made palpable, like numbers, sensations, observations, by strict limits of their own. They are as subtle and undefinable as they are universal. That direct conjunction of mind with the real universe by which knowledge is made possible is in fact a natural relation to the infinite, since the universe *is* infinite: and thus there is an unsounded element, a mystic margin, implied in all our thinking, — a something beyond warrant from experience, beyond explanation from induction or observation, whereby our inferences from these data cover indefinitely larger ground than the data themselves. And this inevitable law of mind is the constant guarantee that prompts to progress as endless resource: that sense of moving more or less freely, in open space, which belongs to the activity of reason. On this silent and boundless atmosphere, inviolable, imperturbable, not to be demonstrated or analyzed or defined, but known in our inward necessity of transcending experience; on this universal element, where no brazen firmament shuts down on us, and whose stars but measure an ether traversable by the light of mind; on this unseen, indubitable space, symbolized in the cosmic deep around our senses, — all human aspiration depends, and the more open we are to the sense of it, the larger and more sublime the world of possibility appears. Here float all wings of promise and belief. Its voice haunts us with a rune that was never wholly silent since man began to know: Thou art more than thy limits in any premises, past or present, in any logic of the eye

and ear. Thou art not made of senses and experiences: they are of thee, and but that larger life of Mind which thou sharest as including, transforming, overflowing them, — the greater that must always explain the less.

Locke's system was, with all its merits, a Book of the Understanding. It skipped all mental data which could not be readily utilized and defined, or left them in a state of helpless vagueness.¹ It disparaged whatever is involved in our relations with the Infinite, and could have no philosophy of beauty and sublimity, which depend on these; none of enthusiasm, loyalty, love, and awe. It not only subordinated the universal to the particular, but made the idea of the Infinite the mere product of limited sensuous conditions, at the same time slurring it as incomprehensible.² A practical effect of this method appeared in the immense influence of English thought on the French mind of the next century. Whatever phraseology of universal ideas attended it, the social dissolution of France at the close of this epoch showed the practical absence of any philosophy based on the control of egotism by reverent culture of the moral ideal.

Its speculative effect had the same way. All knowledge being granted as coming from the senses, what do you know of these at all except through your consciousness? This was Berkeley's inference of the "non-existence of matter." And then comes Hume's trenchant question: "How do we, whose sense-testimony is so plainly uncertain, know any better that consciousness tells us truth?" What answer could be made to that question by those whose sole test of truth was in sensations, and to whom inherent laws of mind, necessary conditions of all experience and all language, and essential relations of subject to object in all thought, were too impalpable to be studied at all? Here opens a gulf of scepticism as to the very power of seeing truth, which leaves man without root in realities; and it inevitably resulted in that failure of earnestness in ethics, philosophy, and faith, which, from this and other causes, characterized literature and life in the latter half of the eighteenth century. That our theories of mind lie very close to the springs of character and

¹ See, for instance, his self-contradictory discussion of the claims of reason and revelation (Book IV, chap. 18).

² See Book II, chap. 17.

conduct is none the less certain in the long run because it would be unjust to infer any special virtues or vices in an individual from his philosophical statements or religious creed. And it is the way in which, consciously or unconsciously, we treat the demand for assurance of that perception of substantial truth which is undemonstrable, — save as being the indispensable condition of earnest thought, — that enables us to contribute to the dignity and progress of mankind. Our philosophy, being the way in which we look at the world, is what we really live by, and goes back of our political or religious relations.

But a philosophic method had commenced which recognized these higher demands; not new in substance, of course, but a fresh inspiration of faith and science to meet them. From Descartes and Spinoza it descended through Leibnitz and Kant, and their later interpreters, Cousin and Jouffroy. It was developed in various forms by Schelling, Hegel, and the higher German metaphysics, and formed an essential part of the English and Scotch philosophies of Cudworth, Reid, and Hamilton, of the idealism of Coleridge and the moral intensity of Carlyle. Its past and present representatives are of no special race, and show, by their great diversity in matters of detail, the endless adaptability of their common method and the wealth of its resources. This method was the psychological, as the other was the "sensational," or experiential. It began at the nearest point; exploring that productive force of mind which constructs the world out of its own laws; itself implied in all terms, processes, explanations, verifications, inductions, as their common substance, which the physicist must presuppose, even when he attempts to find its beginning among the plasmata and cells, if plasma and cell themselves are to have any meaning for him; and which thus constructs, so far as they can be known to him, the very germs which he asserts to be its creator. The transcendental method found its first objective point in the universal substance of mind,¹ — that invisible eye and ear implied in all origins conceivable by man; without which preadamitic light and present sounds and

¹ The question of *self-conscious* mind is a different and secondary one. Even in our personal experience some of the noblest instincts and powers seem to have nothing to do with self-consciousness, but to be, rather, escapes from it into a higher quality and realm of mind. What we here emphasize is mind regarded as the universal substance of knowledge.

colors are alike meaningless and unreal. "Nothing in the mind which was not first in the senses," was the Lockian statement. "Except mind itself," replied Leibnitz.

Analysis of thought as essential and primal leads to the recognition of certain ground-forms of thought as universal, and therefore as known only by transcending the observation of facts; since no number of observations, or "sensible particulars," could of themselves ever prove a universal principle, but require supplementing by larger forces of mind. Such ideas as Unity, Universe, Law, Cause, Duty, Substance (God), Permanence (Immortality), are thus affirmed to be *intuitively*, or directly, perceived; because, while not to be accounted for by any observed and calculated data, they are yet fundamental, and must be referred to organic relations of the mind with truth. And for this sense the term *intuition*, if freed from loose definition, seems to be a very proper one.

Of course the transcendentalist cannot mean by it that at all times and by all persons the truths now specified are seen in the same objective form, nor even that they are always *consciously* recognized in any form. He means that, being involved in the movement of intelligence, they indicate realities, whether well or ill conceived, and are apprehended in proportion as man becomes aware of his own mental processes. They who deny that they perceive these ideas intuitively, mean the more or less questionable forms of them which at the moment prevail. Transcendentalism does not assert that these last are intuitions. It means the enduring substance, not the transient form. What we are to regard as involved in mental movement must surely be, not the special modifications dependent on individual or social opinion, but the universal root-ideas to which all these different branches point. The neglect of this distinction between the necessary conformities of mind and the special inferences that have been built upon them has caused much confused discussion on the subject of intuition.

By intuition of God we do not mean a theological dogma or a devout sentiment; we do not mean belief in "a God," Christian or other; but that presumption of the infinite as involved in our perception of the finite, of the whole as implied by the part,

of substance behind all phenomena, and of thought as of one nature with its object, which the laws of mind require, and which can be detected, in conscious or unconscious forms, through all epochs and stages of religious belief. The intuition of law does not depend on the opinion that this or that order of events, because oft repeated, must be taken to represent a rule of Nature or mind: it consists in that *sense of invariability*, which no amount of such repetitions can explain, since they only affirm uniformity so far as themselves are concerned. Nor is any particular succession of related events to be taken as measure or test of the intuition of cause; which concerns the universal idea of causality, inexplicable by any amount of successions, and meaning production, not succession at all. Nor is every affirmation of special duties to be laid to the account of intuition; which takes cognizance simply of duty itself, of that which makes duties possible — the meaning of Ought.

An intuitive perception, however certain, may be of slow growth, though what it recognizes is in fact a necessary part of mental action. In like manner, products of imperfect experience and self-study often claim that certitude of intuition, as such, which they do not really represent. We do not rest the intuition that the world must be known to us through universal principles on the truth of Plato's archetypal ideas as real essences in the hands of a "World-framer," nor on the truth of modern classification by genera and species, which Agassiz called "the thoughts of God." Yet these were forms, however imperfect, in which that intuition was folded. The uncertainty of many common beliefs about immortality has led many to deny that there is such a thing as intuition of immortality. It is not easy to see how we can have intuitive certainty of the continuance of our present form of consciousness in a future life; still less, of what awaits it in a future life. But it is certain that knowledge involves not only a sense of union with the nature of that which we know, but a real participation of the knowing faculty therein. When, therefore, I have learned to conceive truths, principles, ideas, or aims, which transcend life-times and own no physical limits to their endurance, the aforesaid law of mind associates me with their immortal nature. And this is the indubitable perception, or intuition, of permanent mind, which no experience of imper-

manence can nullify and no Nirvana excludes. But this is plainly incompetent to specific knowledge of form or detail. And so we attach less importance to definite conceptions or images of a future life, the stronger our sense of the permanence of ideas, the unities of love, and the continuities of growth. Imagination, too, the open sense of our highest relations, has the same secret of transcending time. The beautiful comes to the poet at once as reminiscence and prophecy, and, lifted in the heavens, he sings:

"I look on the Caucasus, and it seems to me as if it were not the first time that I am here: it seems as if my cradle had been rocked by the torrents below me, and that these winds have lulled me to sleep; as if I had wandered over these mountains in my childhood, and that at that time I was as old as the world of God."

But such foundations as these are not intellectual merely: here is the only firm ground for universal convictions. The grand words, "I ought," refuse to be explained by dissolving the notion of right into individual calculation of consequences, or by expounding the sense of duty as the cumulative product of observed relations of succession. Can you measure by a finite quantity the amount of allegiance involved in that sense? Is not its claim universal and absolute? What would become of it, if it possessed no authority beyond the uncertain foresight of differing minds as to results, a soothsayer whose worth depended on the truth of his special predictions? A criterion in special duties cannot be the basis of the great fact of duty, nor the origin of an absolute and universal allegiance. How explain as a "greatest happiness principle," or an inherited product of observed consequences, that sovereign and eternal law of mind whose imperial edict lifts all calculations and measures into functions of an infinite meaning? And how vain to accredit or ascribe to revelation, institution, or redemption, this necessary allegiance to the law of our own being, which is liberty and loyalty in one! Yet the language of ever liberal Christian sects would seem to warrant the inference that it was imported into the human soul by the influence or example of Jesus!

"Two things," said Kant, "command my veneration: the starry universe around me, the law of duty within." Yet neither

the infinity of the one nor the authority of the other can be demonstrated by any thing but the fact of sight. They are self-affirmations of mind and for mind. Kant demanded that ethics should not rest primarily on experimental grounds, but on the principle of morality, which is not to be limited or explained by any number of exclusive facts, but stands upon an inherent right to the implicit confidence of men. "Every thing, has either price or dignity. What can be represented by an equivalent has price; what is above all price has dignity."

What Kant did for speculative ethics, Lessing did for theological freedom. It was his working out from this premise of the transcendence of ideal mind, that made Lessing, more truly than any other man, father of our modern liberty to doubt. "Give me, O God, not truth outright, but the joy of striving for truth, even though I never reach that pure light which is thine alone." No grander word was ever uttered. All the free thought of our time is stirring in it. More than any attainment is it to be in earnest to attain: more than any number of special truths is the love of earning truth, the life-task freely taken. Of work and play this is the transcendental ground. For of such rights of mind what demonstration is possible? What induction proves them? 'Tis the open eye itself shining with the very light it sees. Liberty to doubt! If we are products of our sensations, what right or power should we have to doubt? But, if we can doubt all doctrines, so long as we love the earning of truth, what shall explain this but participation in the infinitude of truth? Once more: Spinoza, following this track of transcendent thought to its universal form; assuming, in the serene assurance with which he moves in the pure idea of God, that the perception and participation of the infinite is real, and that philosophy is thus identical with religion; resolving all being into One Substance on the sole authority of thought, — affirms it as man's real life to know, to obey, to love, and, so far, to become, God.

These three leaders of modern thought indicate in their various ways the upward drift of the transcendental method. How indeed should the study of mind in its inherent productive force fail to open those paths of thought which New England transcendentalists used to call man's "inlets to the infinite"? Of such

intuition the contents, though not to be proved, are none the less truly knowledge; because they are assumed in all processes of verification, and because the infinite is as real as the finite and as really known, — being simply that spatial freedom and undefined possibility which are as essential to our minds as cosmic space to stars.

Our method of intellectual inquiry involves, therefore, the highest interests of ethics, philosophy, and faith. In the unity of these three forces centres the movement of our time. Everywhere it insists on making this unity real, not only as direct vision of the laws of the world, but as ideal of personal character. This, in short, is its Religion. Thus its "Way to the Blessed Life" is conceived by Fichte as free obedience to immutable laws, discerned by the individual to be at once his own inmost substance and the order of the worlds, with which he becomes at one by escape from selfish individualism into the personal ideal. A system wrongly called egoism; the *ego* being only the starting point of consciousness in our personal sense of the true and the holy, opening the way to universal truths and duties. The intellectual method of our time is rooted in such intuition of the identity of mind with the substance of that world which it perceives. The same principle has given metaphysics its basis for knowledge in the identity of subject and object, and culture its belief that every aspiration is the human side of a divine necessity. It has taught ethics that self-respect is one with the sovereignty of law. It has revealed to sympathy the solidarity of the race, which simply means that humanity without and heart within have one substance and aim. And so it has inspired, in Europe and America, those universalities which we now express by the words People, Labor, Liberty: ideas, in place of traditional conventionalities and vested fictions, as the motive powers of society: a divinity within the life of man, not outside it.

So with our spiritual philosophy. That the soul can give true report of the Universe, as of that which is of the same nature and purport with its own faculties, enters in various forms into all that religious thought which we call "radical." For this word, *root-thought*, there is no other proper meaning than the recognition that human faculty is related to truth, not by secondary

adaptation, or artificial conjunction, but by a natural unity. This participation in the substance of what we know abolishes those imagined clefts between God, Nature, and Man, which Christian theology has helplessly tried to bridge over by its equally imaginary mechanism of miracle and incarnation. And, finally, to this self-recognition of the mind in its object is due the fearlessness that now animates science and scatters superstition with a self-confidence that no mere induction can explain. Thus, in Tyndall's fine statement, mind is evolved, not out of mere inorganic matter, but from the universe as a whole. This whole, however, is infinite, and involves inscrutable Substance, which, as recognizable only by mind, is therefore of one nature therewith. The lowest physical beginnings are thus, in virtue of the cosmic force by which they exist, actual mentalities, or mental germs. The crude definition of evolution as production of the highest by inherent force of the lowest, is here supplanted by one which recognizes material parentage as itself involving, even in its lowest stages, the entire cosmic *consensus*, of whose unknown force mind is the highest known exponent. Even when apparent as final fruit of evolution, conscious mind is therefore, we conceive, not a new force in the universe, but the substance of the universe itself under the form of individual relations and growth, — an identity which is seen in its capacity, and even necessity, to open out from individualism into universal truth as its natural home.

We must, then, enter our protest against the treatment of this philosophy as the opinion of a small school of thinkers, or as a transient phase of idealism, in due time supplanted by positive science. It purports to be the rationale of human thinking; its method is as organic as induction or association of ideas. Its postulates are involved in these processes, and make them effective. If true once, it is true for ever. Conscious recognition of the laws of mental method is something else than an *ism*. If we call it transcendentalism, we do not forget that it is also realism, as affirming objective realities and grounds of actual life and work. We believe it to be the organic basis of progress: of every step beyond traditional limits; of all ideal faith and purpose. For these, in their refusal to be judged by the dicta of

experience, or by the strict definitions of the understanding, are exponents of an infinite relation in the human ideal. The step beyond experience is the common bond of all upward movements, intellectual, moral, spiritual, æsthetic.

This step is involved in the growth of true personality. Once discern that your experience through the senses is not adequate to account for your conception of the world; once mark how you transform such experience by laws of your own mind and of all mind,—and the free creative function of your being is revealed. And so this perception of a force within us which posits itself over against the limits of experience, as its master, is what delivers individual mind from outward authority into free reason. Ask a dozen men to think of an external object, say a tree: they all turn in one direction, and a supposed common sensation disguises their individuality; but ask them to look at the mental process by which they know the tree, and each finds that the primal source of his perception is internal; and the inference follows that its value must depend on his personal dignity and freedom. I do not mean that personal character is merely an intellectual process. But it is impossible that one should, in any living sense, realize that he is not a mere member of a mass, or product of institutions, but a piece of primal fact and original Nature, unless he is guarded and consecrated by a sense of the law by which he is inwardly related to truth. Then begins high moral culture. Then that earnest dealing with necessity, duty, opportunity, which sets the great tasks, and lifts the life through the aim it serves. Knowing her own solitude and self-dependence, the soul finds at once commandment and freedom in the realities that front her. Self-isolation is the first step to self-consecration. "Gentlemen," began Fichte in his opening lecture on philosophy, "give me your closest attention. Let each of you think this book. Now let each think, not the book, but *himself*." Such his first summons to the noble study of what Kant called the "autonomy of the will," none the less real for the laws of necessity with which it has to deal.

It is by force of the transcendental element in human thought that there was never wanting some measure of healthful reaction from drag-weights of the past, of self-recovery from selfish interests of the present. How could the constant operation of a

law of the mind which overflows all data of experience with ideas whose scope they cannot explain, fail to make prophets in every age,—yea, more or less of a prophet in every thoughtful person? This is the resilient force that throws off effete organized product, supplants waste by repair, adds fresh atoms for an unprecedented life: this the unexplained element, the mystic impulsion, in all growth. The transcendental law becomes impulse and aspiration. Stirred by its ceaseless presence, men listen to the native affirmations of Mind: I am knowledge, and the medium of knowledge; I am inspiration as well as tradition; the instant fire, as well as the inherited fuel, of thought; primal as well as resultant; infinite as well as finite. Hence that eternal dissatisfaction of idealists with the superficial doings around them; with the eager fret and self-waste, the paltry propagandism of book, church, sect; their exacting demand on human nature, which makes them, as Emerson said, "strike work, in order to act freely for something worthy to be done." Whoso scoffs at their refusal to do special things that may seem to him imperative, may well consider whether, after all, the best doing is not *being*. Let him not call it unsocial. What society most wants is criticism by the courage to choose what one respects, and to renounce and reprove what this disdains. We reach civility when men recognize that one in earnest to be doing his proper work is more likely to know what this is than ten thousand other persons who would set him upon theirs. The transcendental impulse accounts not for dissatisfied protest only. It is the basis of interpretations of life and duty by ideal standards: of the spiritual imagination, which for ever confutes, by its far-seeing faith, the gloom and irony in man's actual experience.

A constant in history, it makes "the increasing purpose that through the ages runs." In India, transcendentalism took sensualizing tropic fires for its leverage, and there appeared a philosophy that treated the senses as illusion, and an enthusiasm of brotherhood which gathered a third of mankind into its fold. In Persia and Egypt, it transfigured all great natural forms with inner meaning beyond sensuous traditions and rituals, drawn from the vicissitudes and aspirations of the soul. God, Duty, Immortality—affirmations of the infinite in man, through all special errors,—became the substance of "mysteries" and awe-girded

disciplines, wherein the noblest minds of antiquity learned divine philosophies and tasks. In Greece, when the word-play of sensational logic was destroying certitude in morals and mind, Socrates affirmed personality the measure of all studies, and brought its intuition of the Good, the True, and the Becoming, to silence noisy pretension and confute moral unbelief. Notwithstanding the sophist's measure of all beliefs by individual opinion, what men really needed in Athens was to be disengaged from the crowd, to front their own consciousness of reality. The Socratic *elenchus*, or confuting process, was no mere bit of argumentation, but, as its author himself described it, "spiritual obstetrics," opening to each mind its own productive force. His "*demon*," who was wont to warn him, without giving any reason, against doing this or that thing, was manifestly the self-protective law of a personality that knew its own right to shape circumstance and to reject interference with its ideal. Thence came harvests for all ages in Plato's evolution of his text that the Ideal is the Real; that principles, seen directly by the soul that has found its real self, are the substance of the world. Our chief debt to Greece is summed up in this, — that Socrates and Plato saw the world as outgrowth of mind, mind as its own authority, and personal mind as organically related to universal being.

In Judæa, the reaction against materialism was more intensely moral; authoritative protest of prophet, social exodus of Essene, apocalyptic vision, wilderness cry. Yet the free transcendental philosophy may be read as plainly in writings of the "Apocrypha" dating before the time of Jesus, as in Goethe, or Carlyle, or Emerson, or Parker. In John the Baptist came Hebrew summons to the personal ideal, and Jesus went behind Pharisee ritualism, Sadducee scepticism, and Essene asceticism, — finalities of Hebrew experience, — to the soul that *makes* experience. To the transcendental impulse the ages owe his resort to self-sovereignty, his rejection of the dominant sources of national hope, his enthusiasm of faith in the unseen, his appeal to humanity and to pure ethics against force and formalism, his assertion of infinite relations. That lofty manhood, though swayed by Hebrew conditions, by supernaturalism, by the monarchical principle of Hebrew piety, by its messianic idea and the traditional

habit of claiming special divine commission, by that excessive reaction to despair of the present world which was incident to the times, — was yet so offensive to Jewish experience that martyrdom was the cost of it. But the impulse of humanity that presses beyond experience is greater than any of its own human products, and so it passed the limitations of Jesus to fresh material in other races and times. The democratic movement of that age; the grand Stoic and Epicurean forms of self-respect and faith in Nature; the coalescence of beliefs to higher unities, — did not lose their power of transfusing ages of Christian ecclesiasticism with a redeeming instinct of universality.

Christianity inherited the monarchical idea of a God separate from Man, and a contempt for natural law and human faculty which crippled its faith in the spiritual and moral ideal. It became more and more a materialism of miracle, Bible, Church. Even its essay to realize immanent Deity yielded a more or less exclusive mediatorial God-man; and it treated personality as the mere consequence of one prescriptive historical force, just as philosophical materialism treats it as mere product of sensations. What successions of oppressive creeds and barbarous wars concerning the nature of Christ; what lasting reigns of terror and superstition; what persistent bigotries restrained, not by creed, but only by the political balance of power; what hostility to the steps of science, in crude, perverted forms of ideal desire, — have given way to the patient pressure of an organic necessity behind them all, the transcendental sense of invariable law! Against what reluctant traditions of experience it urges its way! In the Reformation it seemed to thrust its keen edge through the old materialism to the free light. "What makes man's world is not without him, but within: not works then, but faith, not doing, but being, saves." Christianity was broken into individualities. But they proved chips of the papal block. Protestantism swelled with the old leaven of ecclesiasticism. Miracle, Bible, Church, Sabbath, external God, and official Atonement survived in a supernaturalism of which spiritual ideals were regarded as the secretion, just as materialism holds mind to be a function of the bodily organs.

Puritanism was a further protest than Protestantism against institutional experience. It was full of crudities; a pungent

mixture of noble insights with gross superstitions, of transcendental day with traditional night; an uncouth Titan, precursor of an intelligence and order hitherto unknown. Superstition so ran in the grain of it that, after two centuries and a half of American air and space, its medieval spirit brought ministers together to stop access of the people to free reading on Sunday, "because God has given his Bible for that day, and religion will perish without morality." The real transcendentalists of the seventeenth century were the Mayflower Pilgrims; for America, the Rock of Ages was Plymouth Rock. The moral earnestness of the Pilgrims was a step in conscience, precisely like Kant's in philosophy when he showed the sensationalists the mind-element they had left out of their analysis, and led the way through Atlantic deeps of consciousness which they had not dared explore. Did experience create either of these great unaided ventures upon unknown seas? The Plymouth Pilgrim outstepped the intolerance of the Puritan creed. He followed his undemonstrated vision of a free private judgment out of church, home, and civilization itself. But he carried civilization with him in that step of intuition; he took up the wintry leagues of the Atlantic, and made them shining steps to the People's Throne. Well might the ideality that refused to be the product of traditions transfigure for ever that desert continent and howling sea for which it exchanged them. These spaces were there to show that man makes of his experiences *more than experience* by the lift of his spiritual force. Mark close to this group the imperial man of that day, who refused to persecute for belief in any form, and denounced usurpation even in the slayers of a tyrant. "The Lord deliver us from Sir Harry Vane," cried Cromwell, covering his face with his hands, when the clear eyes that never quailed before plot or power searched his own, — eyes of a great conscience conversant with the infinite laws and serenely awaiting martyrdom, that could transfigure with trust the total eclipse of patriot harvests and hopes. Hear that frightened bray of trumpets trying to drown what such a man might dare to say on the scaffold, — a fine expedient, on the theory that mind is the product of things! With what divine irony the transcendental genius of modern liberty meets this pretence of mass-power to abolish men because it is so very easy to abolish the visible shapes of

men, — Algernon Sidney and Harry Vane at the beginning of one epoch, John Brown at the threshold of another, dying on scaffolds as fanatics, to ascend as ideal symbols of power! The charter of the Republic is itself an assumption that undemonstrated ideas are masters of the social elements. For ideas were not demonstrated, are not demonstrable. No data of observation can express their universal meaning. The data are their negations, not their cause; and suggest them, as the finite suggests the infinite, by contrast and insufficiency. What else can we say of ideas than that they are the wondrous intimacies of the human soul with the infinite and eternal, its contacts with universal forces, its prophetic ventures and master steps beyond any past? Yet Stuart Mill fancied that transcendentalism stands in the way of progress. Is there offence to science in our dealing with ideas, because ideas are inscrutable to the understanding? Let such science explain any one thing in Nature or man, with which itself claims to deal, and we will lay to heart these complaints against the ideal.

Justice, Humanity, Universal Rights and Duties, on which progress moves, are transcendental. The idea of a unity of races and of religions; the idea of a true State, combining personal with public freedom; the idea of the Abolitionist that went behind parties and fundamental laws, and put a soul into a dead republic; the idea of equal opportunities for race and sex, — are all transcendental. So is philosophy, as a science of independent principles, based on the necessities of thought. What series of actual facts is represented by the philosophy of history, which assumes to judge the steps of the past and interprets them to high uses of which they had no presentiment? Art is transcendental, — realm of refuge from the woes and imperfections of the actual: Art, the infinite hearing of a deaf Beethoven, the celestial vision of a blind Milton, a Michael Angelo's cry for liberty from the stones of the quarry in an age when the tongues of men were forced to be dumb. Morality is transcendental, — turning fate to freedom and limits to liberties by choosing to accept and abide them. Transcendental, too, is a philosophy of life which can offset the limits of the understanding by such entire trust in whatever shall prove to be spiritual law and natural destiny as needs no guarantee from details, and exacts no promises from the

wise sovereignty of our own nature. This, which is as truly reason as it is faith, I find to be the best form of religion. "Take philosophy out of life," says Maximus Tyrius, "and you lose the power to pray;" which is certainly true, if there is no real prayer but a free aspiration based on the assumption of ideal good. How indispensable is this wide mystic opening and margin for all thought appears in the life of that chief opponent of intuition in our time, John Stuart Mill. Absorbed from his childhood in habits of logical analysis and utilitarian calculation, which excluded the sense of infinity, he naturally enough fell at last into the dismal conviction that all aims, being logically exhaustible, were therefore worthless, and was saved from despair only by betaking himself, under logical protest, to the transcendental imagination of Wordsworth and the prophetic moral sentiment of Carlyle. Nor was this all. Even against himself, he proves to have been a prince of idealists, not only in his socialist enthusiasm and his zeal for an intellectual liberty never yet achieved, but in his estimates of two persons with whom he was in closest intimacy, — his father and his wife. So the materialism of Harriet Martineau, thorough as it seems, did not prevent her from bearing witness that the awe of infinity sanctified her study and her dream.¹

And all these things are transcendental for the same reason that the doctrine of intuition as held by any school in old or new time is transcendental; namely, as recognition of the inevitable step beyond experience or observation by which man lives and grows. According to the intensity of this recognition the law may work in one as conscious philosophical method, in another as enthusiasm for progress, beauty, or good. The basis is always the same, — an organic element of mind, which may be perverted, neglected, ignored, but which holds in some form while sanity endures. It is assumed in every process of induction, and makes the particular premise justify a general conclusion. It is involved in all deductive reasoning, and makes the fact deduced a mere fresh item under an assumed law that gives it all its value. It is the necessity of the materialist himself, who forsakes his principle of sense-derivation as soon as he reaches the crucial

¹ "Autobiography," Vol. II, p. 91.

point of his theory of Nature. Thus Lucretius, the representative materialist of the ancient world, explains the order of the universe as one among innumerable arrangements possible to atoms moving without intelligence, — an idea for which there is no more authority in the senses than for any conception ever forced on them by the mind of man. Even Lange, with all his hatred of Platonic Realism and his strong denial of any source of knowledge but the senses, actually allows that "the tendency to the supersensuous helped to open the laws of the world on the path of abstractions," and that "the ideal element stands in closest connection with inventions and discoveries."¹

If, then, every one is a transcendentalist, whether he knows it or not, what, it will be asked, is the practical worth of the discussion? The same, we reply, which belongs to every question of truth or error. Delusion is not more common than it is harmful. Yet it always consists in mistaking or denying the very laws which are all the while shaping us by their mercies and holding us to their penalties. Papist and radical alike reach their beliefs through acts of choice dependent on their respective mental states: yet ignorance of this inevitable necessity is none the less truly the ground of the vast difference between belief in Freedom and belief in Outward Authority, and of the momentous consequences that result from it. Even if the transcendental method were accepted of all men as the true one, yet, as we have seen, the point of moment is the *emphasis* laid on it, the earnestness and ardor of the acceptance, the force of purpose with which it is applied to life. Its value is in determining our philosophy of culture, as well as in reporting a necessary law of mind.

What, finally, is its relation to science? The idea of law universal and invariable is purely transcendental. No number of experiences could have told us what must of necessity be; no piling of instances could ever have proved that, always and everywhere, like causes must bring like effects. It is a step beyond phenomena, beyond authority from experience; a step of the same significance for philosophy, if not of the same courage, as that of the Plymouth Pilgrim; but taken in the private mind, in

¹ "History of Materialism," pp. 121, 122.

the quiet of natural growth; unconsciously, long before it is apprehended. That such steps are but results of the inherited experience of mankind, who have always employed these processes, is therefore untenable, since the transcending of sensation is in every instance a personal act, and implies that the power of mind to perform it is as instant and fresh in the latest man as in the first. What a moment of joy and light, remembered for ever, is that when first the idea of universal law breaks on the consciousness of a youth, and he marks it as the imperishable relation of his mind to knowledge! Well may it move him. With that perception culture begins. It opens the whole past, and the whole future; it participates in the infinite; it revolutionizes belief; it recognizes what must condition and shape all experience. On this intuition the sciences rest; by this they live, and move, and have their being; and every step they take, now in this day of their triumph, this glad tread of man that goes to the centre of the world, has a transcendental sanction. Clearer and fuller comes the sense of its meaning through their evolution: till it emancipates religion from exceptional and external masters; substitutes social science for supernaturalism as practical redeemer of man; incessantly reforms tradition and recasts institutions; changes rights of private judgment into universal duties; lifts the spiritual ideal beyond forms and names; and will counteract thing-service in physics, politics, and trade by its reach after the ideal and infinite, after undemonstrated truth and good. This is the undertow that bears all surface-currents along its own masterful way. I fear no scheme of evangelicalism to give over the State to a Church of Miracle in an age so possessed by the vision of universal law. Nor do I fear that scientific criticism will be stayed by all that the arsenals of superstition can bring to bear against Tyndall's prayer gauge or Darwin's evolution. Science can be harmed only by denying its own constant dependence on an unseen, ideal principle, authenticated by intuition alone.

A war upon the transcendental method, then, would simply divorce science from that sense of the unlimited and universal which is its own motive force. Science seeks to define, to analyze, to make comprehensible, to show the order and relations of phenomena, to unfold the chain of evolution from lowest matter to highest mind. But, if it finds in these limits and this

ascent from the physical the whole truth of derivation, it must either reject such conceptions as God, Duty, Immortality, or else it must so explain and interpret them as to exclude their *infinite* meaning. The greatest things can only be proved outcomes of the least by emptying them of their greatness. An effect cannot be greater than its cause. God, defined as result of evolution from things, is not Infinite Mind, nor can the substance of the cosmos be the result of its phenomena. Duty cannot be a mere generalization of certain observed successions in human experience, and at the same time mean unconditional allegiance to Right. And how can a consciousness of indissoluble relations with being, which, as the real sense of Immortality, underlies all crude notions of a future life, be justified by tests which derive mind wholly from things, or allow for true only what can be strictly defined and historically explained? To deny the intuitive element is, in consistency, to drop all grounds for these conceptions. But more. To carry out the denial is to abolish science itself. It cuts away the idea of law, which is transcendental; it sweeps off all recognized bases of physical order, — atom, ether, vibration, undulation, correlation of forces, unities of evolution, — which are all ideal, and, however reconcilable with observation, were never outwardly seen, nor heard, nor comprehended, and never can be; and therefore, as assumed explanation of the universe, imply powers of intuitive perception, real insight of the imagination. And, although these theoretic forces must be verified by observation, there is no verification needed nor possible for that necessity in the human mind for universal conceptions and transcendent explanations from which they all proceed.

Nor is this philosophy inconsistent with the ascent of evolution from lowest to highest conditions, since every step in this ascent involves concurrence of the whole, and, in some form or other, relations with its Infinite Substance. To hold fast this reality of substance is indispensable to science. Its laborers must not be so absorbed in watching processes as to ignore that enduring fact which the process implies, and in which it inheres. Now, whether mind be regarded as merely the last link in a chain of physical transformations, or resolved into a compound of sensations alone, in either case its substance disappears; it is

flow of transmutation and process, involving nothing to be transmuted or to proceed. In such definitions as that of Comte, — that "mind is cerebration," — or of Hæckel, — that it is "a function of brain and nerve," — or of Strauss, — that "one's self is his body," — or of Taine, — that one is "a series of sensations," — mind as personality disappears; substance becomes unreal; and we lose all hold on permanent objective truth. It seems a satire to call this negation of the ground of things positive science. I anticipate from science neither suicide nor usurpation, — neither denial of the ideal basis on which it stands, nor pretence of verifying conditions involved in the constant relations of the mind to truth. None the less must special forms of conceiving these relations be brought through its tests and inquiries to represent their real *universality* as transcendental elements. This obviously requires that God should mean, not the outside monarch of the universe, but its immanent Law and Life; that Duty should be, not the imposed sway of an external will, but loyalty to that moral order of which we are ourselves a part, so that our obedience is our freedom and our growth; and that Immortality should be, not a graft nor gift from without, but participation, under what conditions we know not and probably cannot know, in the permanence of the truth and good we see. Science is freeing these intuitions of our highest relations from false assumptions of definite knowledge and from superstitious prescription, and thus harmonizing their *form* with the real order of the world.

Mill constantly objects to transcendentalism that it is unscientific, because it is of faith rather than reason, — an old distinction, well enough taken when faith meant implicit orthodoxy, and had no recognized basis in the very nature of mental action. The highest act of reason and every breath of common logic rest alike on the vast assumption of faith in the human faculties. Every verification of special belief, by which scientific results are reached, involves this profounder belief; even verification of these faculties has no other organ than the faculties themselves. If "the steps of faith fall on the void to find the rock beneath," not less do the steps of science, the postulates of philosophy, the communications of speech. Will it be claimed that we escape these assumptions when we begin at the senses as the most

obvious and trustworthy sources of knowledge? Is there any assumption greater than trusting eye and ear, those mysterious organs, those ether waves that I can neither see nor comprehend? What is all our knowledge but belief? The best physical science swarms with errors. Helmholtz proves the eye an imperfect optical instrument. Proctor takes back his theory of planetary population. Agassiz declares our genera and species the actual thoughts of God, and then Darwin refutes them. The calculus itself is but an approximation. The elements of real knowledge are here, nevertheless. But why do I believe this? Why believe that the world is a whole; that matter and mind, the "me" and the "not-me," are essentially related? I am more certain of this than of any detail of physical science. But as for proof, do I not, in all this, walk by faith, and make that my sight? If I am surer of my ground than an infant or an Australian savage, 'tis none the less true that the experiences which have thus helped me were available only through the constant necessity of the mind to outrun them with universalities which, although thoroughly scientific, were pure ventures of faith.

The transcendentalist emphasizes this basis of faith which science does not outgrow. He will not suffer it to be slighted: and for this reason among others, — that it is the health of the sentiments; of love, hope, aspiration, worship; that it brings to our limitations a sense of relation to a larger, serener life, and repose in its adequacy. But it is a caricature of transcendentalism to make it the basis of absolutist and decaying evangelical dogmas like the Atonement, where the ideal is narrowed down to a prescribed, exclusive embodiment in the name of faith. Its intimacy is inward, — oneness of the believer with the believed; so that the sentiments, set free by it, become nobilities of self-respect, spontaneities that bloom into the best sympathies and cultures; into art, prophecy, heroism, sainthood; into the light and sweetness of the world. The manifest dependence of these fruits of sentiment on faith does not make them at variance with science, — that grand corrector of extravagance in feeling and delusion in thought. For all its special errors, the transcendental impulse has generated a cure in the science that flows from its intuition of law. This is its own balance-wheel, its own saving sense of limit, so that with its head in the hea-

vens, teacher of the eternal life of man, it may walk securely, and do practical work under true human conditions. Its science is thus at once the child of its faith and the leader of its culture. And the spirit of our age, well understanding this unity, points more and more plainly to an ideal standard and test of all tendencies in the conception of the Immanent Spirit as world-movement of law and life, — transforming itself, first into the physical order, then into organic form, then into the Person and the State; the equal sexes, the arts, the humanities, the equities of capital and labor, the harmony of races in functions, the unity of the world in liberty and growth. This high accord of intuition and science is the divine espousal of the ideal and the real. The significance of our term "spirit of the age" is none the less positive because it is transcendental; in other words, not adequately given in any list of persons or events, but in somewhat beyond all these, to which they are all referred, not as an idea only, but as reality. And whoso most truly perceives or expresses this spirit is not only the true transcendentalist, but the builder of the future.

If such is the natural development of the transcendental element in human history, it is not a set of opinions, and no school can be the measure of its validity and scope. For one, I do not propose to speak of it as a phase that has had its day, and is giving way to science. It is an organic principle of thought and progress. Naturally unfolding into the grand results we have sketched, it is yet more or less visible in a great variety of beliefs which have little in common but the fact of being reached by a more or less faithful application of its method. Stated philosophically, it means that the self-affirmation of mind, conditioning all experience, and transcending the senses and the understanding with largest and most vital truths, is recognized as the primal source and guarantee of knowledge. It is the application of this principle to philosophy, religion, ethics, life. It points directly to the primacy of personal intuition, conviction, character. Evidently every individual declaration in the name of universal truth involves it, whatever its results, because it is a step beyond the data of experience. But, like all principles, it has its ideal, founded on its conscious culture and higher uses, which tests

and judges conduct. He who freely uses the private judgment to measure all outward authority presumes the sufficiency of an inward light. But he is true to the ideal principle of transcendentalism only in so far as he really maintains the primacy of personal mind, instead of so carrying out the right of private judgment as to sink that principle or pervert its meaning. Many a loud protest against traditions and institutions has been passive obedience to a far more powerful and brutal despotism, a push of sensual tides submerging the soul; not the sanity of intuition, but the insanity of desires. On the other hand, a poetic nature may be disposed to uphold the institutions in which his feelings have found culture, yet be, as Wordsworth was, completely transcendental, because taking these institutions simply as related to a spiritual ideal, which regenerated literature by its appeal to the beautiful and true, as "the soul that rises with us, our life's star."

In their worship of external authority, the Protestant sects have almost seemed to vie in showing how little might be kept of the transcendental principle, while claiming special advocacy of the right of private judgment. And in the great family of appellants to the "Inward Light," — mystics, rationalists, Quakers, sceptics, ascetics, free religionists, with all unclassified persons of independent and earnest mind, — the intellectual diversities are doubtless not greater than the differences of degree in which their claim of inward light really represents transcendental freedom and progress.

Naturally the main test of fidelity to this principle is one's relation to the moral laws and spiritual forces. Here, again, we must recognize its ideal. The law in his nature, expressed not in articles, rituals, or Bible, not in multitude nor mediator nor specific religious name; this light of his faculties, self-shining with their revelation of the infinity of truth, and the absoluteness of duty, and their participation in that which they know to be eternal; this transcendence to imperfect experience and understanding, — is the consecration of his life; his guarantee of ideal convictions, of broad and beautiful beliefs. And life should seem inestimable, and in this sense at least immortal and divine, through what it is thus proved competent to hold, of enthusiasm for the best cultures, and service of the truth and right that are yet to rule.

In view of this personal ideal, there is a dark side to our social experience. Modern civilization becomes more and more exclusively a life of crowding and concretion. Its solidarity stifles the human atoms, who have been strenuously abolishing space, till the world's immeasurable detail presses directly upon every brain and heart. The intense magnetism of social machinery pushes every demand into unlimited expectation, and gives our vices a force as organic as ever was in State or Church. Corruption wields the resources of recognized method in its management of public and private interests, and has its representative men in every line, who become conspicuous solely because masters in the vulgar arts acknowledged to hold the key to success. An unbounded craving for self-gratification is fostered by the mechanism of our culture, ignoring all differences of material in its training of racers for a common goal. Competition in luxury drives us on in its whirl of dishonest debt and wasteful apery, till you shall barely find a few who dare live with honor, bringing up sons and daughters in just loyalties and simple tastes. Is such demoralization beginning to warn us, in the full tide of organized self-government, of a fatal incapacity of moral freedom and practical self-control?

What shall stay us on such downward tracks? Not, I think, a theory of science, that treats personality as mere run of phenomena, and its claim to be an immediate source of knowledge as a mere fiction of the imagination. This is but an outgrowth of these very degeneracies, and we shall look in vain for healing to the destroyer of our health. Successful trade; gigantic production; school machinery without a germ of individuality or self-reliance in its purpose,—are plainly the forces to be mastered, not the gods to be invoked. Spread of national vanity, grasp of the continent and the isles, are but symptoms of our disease. We want the personal ideal; inward dignities; a self-respect and self-reliance that require new starting points in the philosophy of culture. We want training in principles instead of dissipation on details; conviction that the world reflects the mind, and that the quality of our mind determines the value of our world; respect for the perception of moral order, for the sweep of law that transcends the bounded premise, the insight of prophecy that outruns experience; the freedom of the ideal to

judge outward prescriptions, and reshape the concrete world to fresh necessities of growing reason. We need to react from that excessive reaction against unscientific idealism, which ignores all inward conditions of knowledge, and buries itself in the mere external object or sensation as source of all. And the drift of this current materialism towards resolving human personality into a delusion, and defining man and the world as mere run of phenomena, to say nothing of a pessimistic irony, must be met by emphasizing *substance*, and the real conjunction of the conscious mind with what is permanent and universal. In our zeal for teaching every thing, we are forgetting that the learner is more and greater than all he can learn, and that for him the first of all practical needs is a philosophy of culture that shall determine his methods and aims. In fine, to save us from base politics and selfish relations in trade and labor, we need the constant inspiration of ideal public duties, whereof we have hitherto had perhaps only one form; represented by the anti-slavery movement, and its school of moral culture, friendship, self-accountability, and life-long sacrifice. An education we now bitterly miss, and are destined to miss till we have raised to like levels of principle and conviction such transcendental objects as the rights and duties of labor, the union of equal opportunity with difference of function and honor to the best, and full liberty in the conscience to think, to deny, and to believe.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.